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ABSTRACT

A Washington (District of Columbia) special school offers several programs to serve its population of severely and profoundly retarded students. The Family Style Eating Program focuses on skills involved with eating, while reinforcing on-the-job training in food services. Hands-on experience in a variety of life skills is provided through the Independent Daily Living Skills Project. Another program enables adolescents to increase their productivity in clerical skills as well as to develop work attitudes and competencies needed in a sheltered workshop. An arts and crafts project gives students an opportunity to develop motor-perceptual and cognitive skills. Objectives and activities of the four programs are reviewed. (SW)

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A Novel Approach to Programming for Special Education Students in the District of Columbia Area

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INTRODUCTION

Since the sixties under the Kennedy administration there has been a decline in new programs for the handicapped. However, handicapped equal treatment has been well guarded and supported.

Because of the dearth of innovative programs in the District of Columbia Metropolitan Area, special educators have had to provide new programs for the handicapped. The staff of Mamie D. Lee School for the Severely and Profoundly Retarded, located in Northeast Washington, in its effort to provide appropriate services for the very, special population of the school has devised the following programs: Family Style Eating, Daily Living Skills, Clerical Skills, Sheltered Workshop and Special Arts and Crafts projects.

"Learning By Doing"- Family Style Eating

Providing severely mentally retarded students with real life experiences can be very difficult but rewarding. The Family Style Eating program was developed at the Mamie D. Lee School to ensure that this basic skill becomes a vital part of the curriculum for severely retarded students. This program also reinforces on-the-job training in food services. Many of our students are employed in this area during the summer, and several Mamie D. Lee graduates have full time positions in food services with the District of Columbia Public Schools. This program is based on John Dewey's philosophy, namely "Learning By Doing". The concept that retarded students imitate and retain many more skills by daily practice has become more than theory at the Mamie D. Lee School. It has become a reality.

Program Objectives

1. The students will demonstrate increased proficiency in utilizing eating utensils in a variety of social settings, as measured by teacher observations.
2. The project will provide increased opportunities for reinforcement of the following social amenities (please, thank you, and excuse me) in a variety of situations as measured by teacher observation.
3. The students will demonstrate increased proficiency in table setting for various occasions, as measured by teacher observation.

With daily practice the students will be able to:

1. Discuss good nutrition.
2. Set the table properly.
3. Set up chairs and tables.
4. Set own place setting at the table.
5. Serve self appropriate amount of food.
6. Practice good manners and social graces.
7. Remove dishes
8. Wipe table and placemats
9. Leave eating area clean and neat.

This skill program promotes unity among the students and faculty. It enhances basic instruments of teaching the exceptional population.

Independent Daily Living Skills

The Independent Daily Living Skills Project will provide "Hands On" experience for the students who in future years, must become functional members of society. As teachers of Special Education, one of our primary responsibilities is to provide training in this area. Hopefully, we will keep abreast of trends in the current job market so that our students will be equipped with the necessary skills to become productive members of society upon completion of the educational requirements for Special Education. The Mamie D. Lee School was designed and equipped to provide a variety of life skills, such as an apartment and Home Arts Room. In keeping with the objective of the Mamie D. Lee School, the Independent Living

Skills Project goals and objectives will parallel the goals and objectives of the District of Columbia Public Schools.

Program Objectives

1. The student will be able to identify and secure the necessary equipment and supplies for a variety of housecleaning activities as measured by teacher observation.
2. The student will be able to perform various daily living skills in proper sequential order based on a behavioral check list.
3. The student will be able to determine when a specific task should be performed as measured by teacher observation.
4. A task analysis approach will be utilized to insure that all students will be able to accomplish a portion of the skill and so that the instructor will be able to identify the exact strand which needs to be re-taught.

Clerical Skills/Sheltered Workshop

Using a "hands on" job training approach to instruction, the pre-vocational, clerical skills, sheltered workshop at the Mamie D. Lee School for the severely retarded school age population provided a realistic program of learning experiences for a group of adolescent students, that enables them to increase their productivity in clerical skills, as well as to develop work attitudes and competencies necessary for survival in a sheltered workshop.

The special child must be adequately prepared to function efficiently in a sheltered workshop setting. Providing non-simulated job experiences for the special child is the key to his/her success in pre-vocational training. This gives the special child an opportunity to explore practical, realistic, and relevant "hands on" job related clerical skills.

Program Objectives

1. Demonstrate increased proficiency in pre-vocational skills as evidenced by pre and post assessments.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in selected clerical skills in a workshop setting as evidenced by qualitative and quantitative analysis.
3. Demonstrate an increased awareness of appropriate use of work time as evidenced by on site observations and informal assessments.

In order to accomplish the goals and objectives of the project, the classroom teacher contracted with agencies in the community to deliver and upon completion retrieve the various jobs.

Based on the identified clerical skills; counting, collating, stapling, labeling, stuffing, sealing and packaging, the students have increased their productivity by 80% as evidenced by informal assessments. The contract opportunities have been increased and expanded.

Arts and Crafts for the Handicapped

Arts and crafts offer a unique opportunity to develop in the handicapped child, motor-perceptual and cognitive skills. They are fun and by their nature, non-threaten. Arts and crafts activities give the handicapped child an opportunity to handle various media, and thus develop concepts about a variety of materials to which they would not ordinarily be exposed. Thus, arts and crafts activities can make perceptual learning pleasurable for the child in your class while providing you with an inexpensive tool with which to meet each child's needs.

Arts and crafts activities foster a variety of basic skills. These skills can be grouped into two major areas: perceptual - motor skills and cognitive skills.

The sensory-motor development involves the integration of sensory information - tactile kinesthetic, visual and auditory. Through motor activities, a handicapped child becomes aware of his or her own body, its parts and how they work, and develop a body concept. To reinforce body image and body concepts, these activities involve body parts and the entire body in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms such as:

1. Laterality
2. Bilaterality
3. Directionality
4. Tactile-Kinesthetic
5. Motor Planning
6. Eye-Hand Coordination
7. Fine Motor Skills

Cognitive skills are those related to concept formation and abstract thought. Arts and crafts activities foster a variety of cognitive skills such as:

1. Association
2. Sequencing Skills
3. Time Concepts
4. Number Concepts

Perceptual-Motor Development Activities

1. Paper Mache' Animals
2. Rock and Pebble Sculptures
3. Paper-Boy Heads
4. Decorating Real Pumpkins
5. Santa's Face
6. Cut-Circle Snowmen
7. Toothpick Structures
8. Fall Seed Chart
9. Tape-Covered Vases
10. Head Silhouettes
11. Simple Modules
12. Basic Shaped Trees

Cognitive Development Activities

1. Clothespin Trivet
2. Sandcasting
3. Special Decorations
4. Feather Flowers

Cognitive Development Activities (Cont.)

5. Winter Trees
6. Whipped-Soap Snowmen
7. Chick-in-a-Shell
8. Kite Decorations

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